

OGC 70-0786

15 May 1970

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Mr. Helms has asked me to respond to your letter of May 8, 1970. I note you refer to the Senate amendment to the military act and believe the private citizen can best attempt to influence affairs through his representatives in the Congress.

Let me explain a bit about the function of this Agency. As you probably know, our primary duty is to furnish foreign intelligence information and estimates on foreign developments to the policymakers of Government. We are specifically prohibited from any internal-security activities and consequently are not directly involved in domestic matters. All of us who make up the staff of the Agency are, of course, personally concerned with the serious problems confronting our country, both domestic and foreign, but in view of the basic role of the Agency, it can have little impact on the domestic side. Obviously, intelligence contributes to the formulation of policy, but if we are to maintain our standards of objectivity we cannot and should not play a decisive role.

The Government is made up of many components, each with its particular statutory responsibilities and limitations on those responsibilities. That is why I feel, as I said in opening, the private citizen's best chance of influencing the course of Government is through his representatives in the Congress.

Sincerely,

cc: Asst to DCI-Mr. Goodwin
ER w/basic via O/DCI
Legislative Counsel
General Counsel

s/
Lawrence R. Houston
General Counsel

76-2444

May 8, 1970

Richard Helms
Director, C.I.A.
Washington, D.C. 20505

Dear sir:

In considering myself a concerned citizen, I feel it is my duty to inform you of my feelings regarding the recent Presidential decision to employ American troops in Cambodia. I feel that it is a direct violation of the Constitutional rights of the American people and a violation of their rights in a democratic society.

I feel that it is time to reevaluate the American policy in Indo China and urge consideration, and approval of the McGovern Resolution in the best interests of world peace and peace at home.

Very sincerely yours,

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